

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 (canceled).

2 (currently amended).      A cutting tool subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade assembly, including a blade carrier having a tang and a sharpened cutter mounted removably on said blade carrier;
- (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade carrier, said jaw and said blade carrier being movable relative to each other about said blade pivot joint;
- (d) a first handle connected to said base of said jaw by a first handle pivot joint and movable about said first handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said jaw; and
- (e) a second handle connected to said tang of said blade carrier by a second handle pivot joint and movable about said second handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said blade carrier, and wherein said second handle includes an abutment face at an end thereof adjacent said second handle pivot joint, and wherein said tang includes a main portion in a first plane and a leg extending laterally away from said main portion in a second plane normal to said first plane, said leg being aligned with said abutment face and resting against said abutment face when said second handle is in said extended operative position.

3 (previously presented).      The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said second handle includes a channel having a pair of side walls and a base interconnecting said side walls and defining said abutment face.

4 (previously presented).      The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said jaw is a bypass support jaw and said cutter is a bypass cutting blade arranged to cooperate with said jaw, and wherein said cutting tool is a pruning shear.

5 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein each of said handles defines a respective channel having a pair of channel side walls, said channels facing inwardly toward each other when said handles are in their folded positions and facing outwardly apart from each other when said handles are in their extended positions with respect to said jaw and said blade, and wherein each of said side walls of one of said handles includes cushioning portions of ~~an~~ a resiliently soft rubber-like elastomeric material overlying and extending along a margin thereof so as to cover said margin and present said soft rubber-like elastomeric material along said margin for comfortable contact with a user's hand.

6 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 5 wherein one of said channel side walls includes a supporting portion of metal and a molded shell layer of a rigid thermoplastic material attached thereto, and wherein said cushioning portions of resiliently soft rubber-like elastomeric material are molded over said shell layer.

7 (original). The subassembly of claim 5 wherein said cushioning portions are molded onto said margins of said side walls.

8 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said blade pivot joint includes a tension screw and a locknut adjustably engaged therewith, said tension screw and locknut being arranged to keep said blade assembly and said jaw suitably closely alongside each other.

9 (canceled).

10 (previously presented). A cutting tool subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade assembly, including a blade carrier having a tang and a sharpened cutter mounted removably on said blade carrier;
- (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade carrier, said jaw and said blade carrier being movable relative to each other about said blade pivot joint;

(d) a first handle connected to said base of said jaw by a first handle pivot joint and movable about said first handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said jaw; and

(e) a second handle connected to said tang of said blade carrier by a second handle pivot joint and movable about said second handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said blade carrier, said jaw defining a cavity surrounding said blade pivot joint and a groove extending away from said cavity, and said subassembly including a spring located within said cavity, said spring having a pair of opposite ends, a first of said opposite ends extending into said groove and thereby being engaged with said jaw, and the other of said opposite ends extending from said cavity to said second handle pivot joint and thereby being engaged with said tang of said blade carrier, and said spring urging said jaw and said blade assembly to pivot apart from each other about said blade pivot joint.

11 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 2, including a blade safety lock carried on one of said handle pivot joints and movable between an engaged position in which said blade safety lock engages one of said jaw and said blade assembly and ~~thereby holds~~thereby holds said jaw in a closed position with respect to said blade assembly, and a disengaged position in which said jaw and said blade assembly are free to move between said closed position and an open position, said blade safety lock being arranged with respect to one of said handles so that said one of said handles urges said blade safety lock into said engaged position when said one of said handles approaches said folded position thereof.

12 -14 (canceled).

15 (currently amended). A subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade defining a blade plane and including a blade base having a tang parallel with said blade plane;
- (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade, said blade being movable about said blade pivot joint with respect to said jaw between an open position and a closed position;
- (d) a first handle including an abutment face;

- (e) a second handle attached to said base of said jaw;
- (f) a first handle pivot joint interconnecting said first handle with said tang, said first handle being movable about said handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said blade; and
- (g) a leg attached to and extending laterally away from said tang in a plane normal to said blade plane, said leg being engaged against said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

16 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said first handle includes a channel having a channel base and a pair of side walls, and wherein said abutment face is a part of said channel base and said leg extends along and in contact with said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

- 17 (currently amended). A subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:
- (a) a jaw having a base;
  - (b) a blade having a generally planar tang;
  - (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade, ~~said blade being~~ blade being movable about said blade pivot joint with respect to said jaw between an open position and a closed position;
  - (d) a first handle including an abutment face and including a channel having a channel base and a pair of side walls, said abutment face being a part of said channel base;
  - (e) a second handle attached to said base of said jaw;
  - (f) a first handle pivot joint interconnecting said first handle with said tang, said first handle being movable about said handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said blade; and
  - (g) a leg extending laterally away from said tang, said tang being oriented parallel with one of said side walls of said channel, and said leg ~~extending laterally from said tang,~~ and being oriented parallel with said channel base and extending along and being engaged against and in contact with said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

18 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 17 wherein said tang of said blade and said leg are included in a single piece of sheet metal and said leg is a portion of

said single piece located in a plane oriented at an appropriate angle to a plane including said ~~tang to tang~~ to align said leg with said abutment face.

19 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said first handle includes a channel having a pair of side walls and a channel base defining said abutment face, and wherein said tang includes a main portion and said leg extends laterally at an angle away from said main portion and is aligned with said abutment face and rests against said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

20-21 (canceled).

22 (previously presented). A cutting tool subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade having a tang and a sharpened edge;
- (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade, said jaw and said blade being movable relative to each other about said blade pivot joint;
- (d) a first handle connected to said base of said jaw by a first handle pivot joint and movable about said first handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said jaw;
- (e) a second handle connected to said tang of said blade by a second handle pivot joint and movable about said second handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said blade; and
- (f) said jaw defining a cavity surrounding said blade pivot joint and a groove extending away from said cavity, and said subassembly including a spring located within said cavity, said spring having a pair of opposite ends, a first of said opposite ends extending into said groove and thereby being engaged with said jaw, and the other of said ends extending from said cavity to said second handle pivot joint and thereby being engaged with said tang of said blade, and said spring urging said jaw and said blade to pivot apart from each other about said blade pivot joint.

23-27 (canceled).

28 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said sharpened cutter includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

29 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 10 wherein said sharpened cutter includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

30 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said blade includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

31 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 17 wherein said blade includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

32 (canceled).

33 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 22 wherein said blade includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

34 (new) The subassembly of claim 11, wherein said blade safety lock includes a catch body that is mounted pivotably on said one of said handle pivot joints, said catch body defining an opening, and wherein said blade carrier has a pin projecting from said tang thereof, said pin being engaged in said opening and thereby limiting rotational motion of said catch body around said one of said handle pivot joints.